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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HAVANA 020783

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STATE DEPT FOR WHA/CCA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/11/2016

TAGS: PREL KN PARM KNNP CU

SUBJECT: CUBANS UNEASY WITH DPRK NUKE TEST

REF: A. (A) SECSTATE 196418

1B. (B) HAVANA 18991
1C. (C) HAVANA 18307

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Classified By: COM Michael Parmly for Reason 1.4 (?)

11. (C) Summary: The Cuban Government on October 10 signaled its displeasure with North Korea's reported nuclear test. In language lacking the warmth usually reserved for a fellow communist nation, Cuban state media reported the UN Security Council's condemnation of the reported underground blast and noted firm Chinese opposition as well. The GOC's detailed reference to the Chinese Government's position speaks volumes about China's growing role as a "sugar daddy" to the regime. End Summary.

12. (U) The GOC responded coolly October 10 to North Korea's reported nuclear test, in a state-media article that notes UNSC and Chinese objections but offers no firm GOC position, and also no solidarity to a fellow communist nation. In a front-page, two-column article in Granma (translation below), the GOC notes that the Security Council met and condemned the incident. The article adds that the UNSC is poised to discuss economic and other sanctions against North Korea.

13. (U) Tellingly, the article describes in detail the Chinese Government's firm opposition to the reported underground test. It quotes three times from the Chinese Government's "strong statement" on the matter, including its view that the North Koreans ignored "the generalized opposition of the international community."

COMMENT

14. (C) Granma's detailed remarks on the Chinese position speak volumes about China's growing importance to the Cuban regime. And for good reason; trade between the two countries has doubled over the past five years, according to Cuba's Minister of Economics and Planning (reftel B). China has half a billion dollars invested in Cuba's nickel industry, plus major investments in energy, electronics, transportation and biotechnology. Cuba sees China right behind Venezuela as an economic benefactor (reftel C). The GOC is pragmatically defending its hopes for further trade financing credits from China. In short, the Cuban regime knows what side its bread is margarineed on.

TRANSLATION

15. (U) Following is an unofficial translation of the Cuban announcement:

On October 3, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Democratic Republic of Korea announced that it intended to carry out a nuclear test. Six days later, it was learned that the nuclear test had taken place.

On that same day, October 9, almost unanimous critical commentaries immediately began appearing regarding that event.

The UN Security Council met in the morning of the 9th and its members condemned the test, which they said was a threat to international peace and security.

According to what has been announced, that UN body is to meet to discuss a proposed resolution on the matter, which predictably will be based on a document that is already circulating and includes economic and other types of sanctions against the People's Democratic Republic of Korea.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said that this action violates the international regulations on disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as the current moratorium on nuclear testing.

The People's Republic of China issued a strong statement, affirming that "the People's Democratic Republic of Korea flagrantly carried out the nuclear test, ignoring the generalized opposition of the international community." The Chinese Government also stated that it was "firmly opposed to that action." Likewise, it "urged all parties involved to respond serenely and to persist in the search for a solution via consultation and dialogue." China announced that it

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would "continue making every effort to reach that goal."

It is to be expected that the coming days will be highly tense in international political and diplomatic circles, when discussion begins in the UN Security Council on a series of heavy international sanctions against the People's Democratic Republic of Korea as a result of the nuclear test. End
unofficial translation.

PARMLY